

Richard L. Trumka
AFL-CIO

Richard Trumka is president of the 12.5-million-member American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), the largest organization of labor unions in the country. An outspoken advocate for social and economic justice, Trumka is the nation's clearest voice on the critical need to raise workers' wages in this slow and painful recovery from the Great Recession. He heads the labor movement's efforts to build broadly shared prosperity and to hold government and employers accountable to working families.

Trumka is a tireless advocate for good jobs and for strengthening the middle class by restoring workers' freedom to join and form unions. He works passionately to end unfair trade practices and support U.S. manufacturing. His innovative leadership has established investment programs for union pension and benefit funds in order to create long-term value for workers. He challenges excessive corporate power and abuses of workers' rights here and abroad. He has confronted racism and classism head on—from apartheid in South Africa to mass incarceration and immigration reform in the United States.

Trumka began his career as a coal miner, and continued to work in the mines as he attended Penn State University and Villanova University Law School. In 1982, at age 33, he ran on a reform ticket and was elected the youngest president of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). There he led one of the most successful strikes in recent American history against the Pittston Coal Company, which tried to avoid paying into an industry-wide health and pension fund. Trumka joined an insurgent campaign and was elected secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO in 1995. He became the federation's president in 2009.